



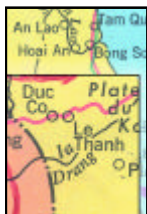
TOUGH 'OMBRE

Published for the Soldiers and Families
of the 90th Regional Readiness Command

April-June 2004

Inside:

- *PREP helps returning Soldiers, spouses*
- *468th returns from Iraqi Freedom mission*



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Submission deadline

Aug. 20, 2004, is the deadline for submitting articles and photos for the next issue of the magazine. If you have questions, call Warren Byrd at (501) 771-8974/7900.

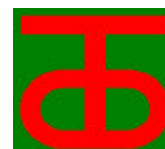
On the covers:



Front - LaTasha Cannon greets her husband, Staff Sgt. (now 2nd Lt.) Kennada Cannon of the 468th Chemical Battalion upon the unit's return from Iraq in April. Story on page 3. (Photo by Warren Byrd)



Back - Maj. Michael Callahan of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 489th Engineer Battalion, holds his son John, dressed identically to his dad, at the welcome home ceremonies in Conway, Ark., upon the unit's arrival from Iraq in April. (Photo by Spc. Brian Raley)



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Submission of articles and photos by soldiers and other interested parties is encouraged. We prefer standard photos but will accept high quality digital photos, specifically TIF files of 300 dpi or better resolution.

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468th adapts, overcomes

By Spc. Brian Raley
90th RRC Public Affairs

The term “adapt and overcome” is familiar to Army Reserve Soldiers. Now, more than ever, Soldiers have to adapt to perform missions outside their Military Occupational Specialty.

The 468th Chemical Battalion from Little Rock, Ark., knows very well how to adapt to a changing mission. Its Soldiers are trained to react to nuclear, biological and chemical threats. Its recent deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, however, was hardly a chemical mission.

The 468th arrived in Camp Commando, Kuwait, in April of 2003 ready to perform its mission to the best of its abilities. As often happens in the Army, they did not get a chance to perform their duties as planned.

Capt. Darrell R. Young, commander of the Headquarters Detachment, was ready to hit the sand running, but his mission changed before he even arrived. They quickly assumed command and control of the 413th Chemical Company, an Army Reserve unit from South Carolina, the 323rd Chemical Company, a National Guard unit from South Dakota, and the 101st Chemical Company, an active component from Fort Bragg, N.C.

“We had a variety of personalities and everything had to come together to make things work, and it did,” Young said. He explained how the unit’s role changed when it reached the theater of operations. “We are chemical units, but there were no chemicals. So, we performed other missions. We did escort details of third country nationals and the staff worked on contingent plans in case chemical weapons were to become an issue.”

Most of the deployment was spent supporting the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, or (MEF), at Camp Commando. Their primary mission at Commando was to escort third country nationals, or TCNs. In order to keep Soldiers on task and performing vital missions, TCNs were hired on base to help clean, among other things. Though TCNs are not considered hostile, they can still pose a threat. It was the



Photo by Warren Byrd

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Rutledge of the 468th Chemical Battalion is greeted by his wife, Missy, and grandson Michael upon returning from Iraq.

468th’s job to keep an eye on them to ensure they could not create problems and also to manage them to make sure they performed their jobs efficiently. Escorts were with them at all times. Whether a TCN was emptying a portable latrine or policing trash, an escort was with them, even in 130-degree heat.

Sgt. William A. Yates, tabbed the “King of the Escorts,” by unit members,

remembers his least favorite part of the detail. “One of the lowest points of the deployment was being stuck on escort detail. We would get on the sewer trucks and escort the third country nationals while they cleaned and emptied the porta-johns. It was hot and it stunk like you wouldn’t believe,” he said.

Though he was the “King of the

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Stars Speak



We continue to be an Army at war for a Nation at war! The men and women of our Armed Forces are doing incredible work on behalf of their country in places like Korea, the Balkans, Latin America, Africa and in the former Warsaw Pact states of Eastern Europe. And they are serving in incredibly dangerous places like Afghanistan and Iraq. They are PATRIOTS and they are making our country and the world safer.

And now more than ever, our Army and our nation are depending on our Army Reserve. The mission cannot be accomplished without our Soldiers and our Soldiers cannot do their jobs without solid family and community support.

Operation Iraqi Freedom continues and the 90th RRC has sent more Soldiers and units to join the fight. But we also have Soldiers returning. Several of our units have recently returned after completing a year plus of mobilization and deployment. They have served well but, as expected, they are really happy to be home. Recently returning are the 489th Engineer Battalion, 493d Engineer Group, 217th Transportation Company, 468th Chemical Battalion and the 827th Quartermaster Company.

Just this week, several of us were privileged to hear from two of our thousands of professional soldiers who have gone and served. What incredible stories they have to tell.

One returning soldier is Lt. Col. Larry Mahar. Col. Mahar led his several hundred strong, 489th Engineer Battalion for the entire mobilization and deployment period. He talked about the difficulty of the mission, but he spoke with pride about how the Soldiers responded. During the time of their deployment, they were attached to five different combat commands at one time or another. Their mission varied over time. In the Engineers, we have units that take things apart and we have units that built things. The 489th's normal mission is to take things apart (clear paths for our armored forces) but during their deployment, they found themselves supervising and conducting construction projects. And they did them well.

Another recently returned Soldier is Lt. Col. (Dr.) Laurie Hughes. Col. Hughes is an orthopedic surgeon and she lives in Little Rock with her physician husband and their three children. Ordinarily, she is assigned to the RRC headquarters as the Deputy Surgeon. But for the past four months, she was an orthopedic surgeon on a U.S. Army Forward Surgical Team in Iraq. I have to stop and think about the incredible skills of an orthopedic surgeon and realize how rare they are in the Army Reserve. But we had one of our own in Iraq treating our Soldiers and others as the mission dictated.

She speaks with pride about what her medical team accomplished while they were there. She has lot to say and I could not begin to do justice to it here, so I have asked her to write about her experiences for the next issue of the Tough Ombre because it's a story that needs to be told. Look forward to that.

In coming issues of the Tough Ombre, I am asking soldiers like Lt. Col. Mahar and Lt. Col. Hughes to write about their experiences in OIF. We will also be asking privates, sergeants and junior officers as well as senior officers and NCOs to do the same. These are stories that we all need to hear. It will help our apprecia-

tion for what has been done and it might well affect how we are able to perform as more of us get ready to take our place there.

While our great Soldiers are doing tough work while deployed, we also have great Soldiers performing magnificently back here. Command Sgt. Maj. Dale and I see it every day as we are with our Soldiers and units. I want to share an e-mail I received from one new NCO. She certainly didn't ask that I do that, but I want to share it as an illustration of the kind of Soldiers we have in our ranks.

It is from Sgt. Shamari Tudhope, who is assigned to the 340th Quartermaster Company in San Antonio, Texas. Command Sgt. Maj. Dale and I visited with Sgt. Tudhope while we were in San Antonio recently for a Town Hall meeting with some of our 90th families. The 340th is normally part of Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTFCS). It is prepared to deploy anywhere in the U.S. on 48 hours notice to assist in decontamination requirements in the event of a WMD attack. The 340th is commanded by Capt. Mark Braswell and the first sergeant is Ernesto Rubio, Jr.

Dear Sir,

Hi and hello from Texas. It is getting hotter everyday!!! I hope your trip back home was good. I wanted to let you know that I contacted all the families of the deployed soldiers from the town hall meeting and many of them attended a family readiness group workshop from the Operation READY program at Fort Sam last Friday. We received good reviews from the families along with a few tears!!! That made my day. We want to extend an invitation to you and Command Sgt. Maj. Dale to come to the great state of Texas again to observe the Weapons of Mass Destruction Quick Response Team that we formed for homeland defense. I get so excited about the great things that we are doing here. The whole operation is really neat to watch unfold and we were hoping that you could squeeze a small amount of time to stop by and observe. The Soldiers have worked hard to get the team to where it is now and I am amazed at the mobility of the team. Just for the record Sir, as you know I am a newly pinned NCO. We look forward to your visit if it can be arranged.

**SGT Shamari Tudhope,
340th QM Co, PSNCO
San Antonio, Texas**

I think this short e-mail pretty well sums up my point about what great Soldiers we have out there. Command Sgt. Maj. Dale and I will "squeeze" out more than a little time to go see what the 340th is doing. We want to see all of it. As a matter of fact, we will be out to see many of our Soldiers and units as they continue to hone their skills and serve their country.

Every day I am even more appreciative of what our Soldiers and families do.

It's an honor to serve!

MG James R. Sholar

'Ombre 6

from the CSM's desk...

By Command Sgt. Maj. Roger Dale

When asked what the most important leadership position in the Army is, most Soldiers state that it is the first line leader. This is the leadership position that Soldiers in a squad or section will most likely recognize and identify with. They will be responsible for ensuring that Soldiers entrusted to them are technically and tactically well trained, physically fit, professional and motivated. They also have the responsibility of ensuring that problems their soldiers encounter are addressed and resolved in a timely manner. This could include, but is not limited to, finance problems, promotion problems, problems with bonuses and equipment issue problems.

This looks like a lot to put on the shoulders of a new leader. It is. Yet, the welfare of their Soldiers, as well as the overall success of the unit can be affected by how well the first line leader is able to accomplish all of this. Having established all of this, it also needs to be said that this most critical of leaders is placed in a position with little or no preparation for fulfilling the responsibilities of the job. This is a fact that has been accepted as truth for some time, but the question has been what to do about it. Even if the new first line leader had been to the Primary Leadership Development Course they would not have received training in all the areas necessary to properly take care of their soldiers. In the 90th Regional Readiness Command our answer to this concern was the development and implementation of a Junior NCO Training Course (JNTC).

JNTC is a course for newly promoted sergeants (E-5s) that focuses on skills and information that prepares the new first line leader to take better care of their soldiers. JNTC is currently scheduled to be conducted a minimum of twice a year. The first class was held last November with approximately 100 students in attendance. The students reported on a Friday and began classes Friday night. Saturday was a full day with classes all day, ending with a formal dining-out that night. Sunday included chapel, a few hours of classes, NCO Induction Ceremony and graduation.

The classes on Friday evening included a presentation on

leadership concepts, a brief overview of the history of the 90th Division, (the active Division during World Wars I and II whose honors and heraldry the 90th RRC now carries), instruction on the history and meaning of the NCO Creed, and information on the history of the enlisted ranks.

Most of Saturday was taken up with the students rotating through six different classes. Class one included instruction on leader's books, caring for, training and retaining Soldiers, and the health and welfare of Soldiers. Class two focused on career progression and promotion packet preparation. Class three was concerned with NCOERs, the form itself, correct preparation of the NCOER and proper conduct of NCOER performance counseling. Class four included information on accountability of Soldiers you supervise, attendance, appearance and awards. Class five focused on mobilization, family care plans, and security clearances. Class six provided an overview of ATRRS, information on the importance of DMOSQ with its relationship to readiness and the importance of enforcing standards and making on-the-spot corrections.

All of the topics apply both to the Soldiers attending and the Soldiers they lead. It is a course developed, implemented, and taught by NCOs for NCOs. The goal of JNTC is to give the first line leader an understanding of the scope of their responsibilities as well as the tools to carry out those responsibilities. If you are an NCO with newly promoted sergeants (E5s) assigned to you, I want you to ensure that they are aware of the course, enrolled and attend. If you are a newly promoted Sergeant (E-5), I want to see you at this course. It is developed, designed and conducted for you.

Soldiers Are Our Credentials



Care Point

**By Chaplain (Col.) Ed Simpson
90th RRC Command Chaplain**

The recent abuse of the Iraqi prisoners has embarrassed and saddened the nation, creating a firestorm of response around the world. The errant behavior of a few has undermined the legitimacy of coalition operations and tarnished the integrity of the United States and the dedicated men and women of our armed forces.

Officials fear the negative impact of these events may be far reaching. Obviously, attaining coalition objectives will be more difficult and relations with the Arab world will be

strained. This tragic failure underscores the importance of superior training, soldier accountability, proper supervision and adherence to the Army core values.

There is no excuse for not doing what is right. Soldiers have the responsibility and the moral obligation to evaluate every order and determine if it is lawful or not.

When in doubt, choose the higher laws. The higher law respects human life, listens to one's conscience, treats others humanely and looks to God for divine direction.

The Bible says, "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully (Prov. 28:5)." "He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall (Prov. 28:18)."

Hold yourself and others to the moral and spiritual high ground in every area of life.

For God and country.

Vietnam Vet, 420th SSA discusses war in Iraq

**By Sgt. 1st Class Larry Mears
90th RRC Public Affairs**

Mr. Marvin Whittaker, supervisory staff administrator of the 420th Engineer Battalion in Bryan, Texas, has seen wars and the American Army from many different angles.

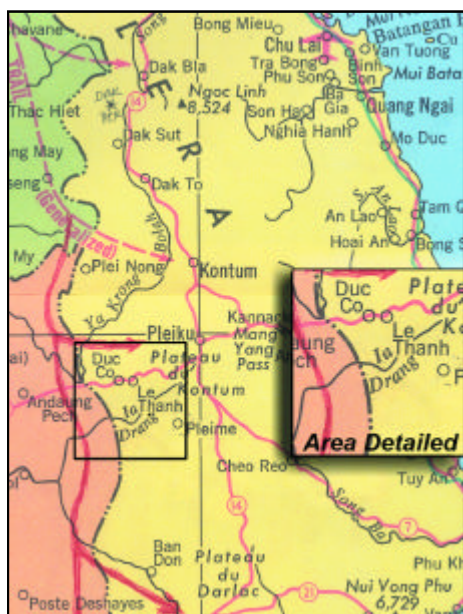
He saw it first in Vietnam as a lower-ranking enlisted man when he and his unit, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 7th Cavalry Regiment fought the first major battle in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965. The actions of the 7th Cav were put into a bestseller book with the title, "We were soldiers once...and young." The book was later made into a movie.

Whittaker later returned to Vietnam as a warrant officer helicopter pilot for a second tour.

He received his commission and served as a lieutenant colonel during Operations Desert Shield and Storm. His experiences in these wars have given him some strong opinions about Operation Iraqi Freedom in comparing his Vietnam experiences. He also offered advice to the returning soldiers and their families.

He discussed the similarities of the way that the Global War on Terrorism began.

"We went to Vietnam with a purpose,



U.S. Army photo

A Soldier moves back to the landing zone after popping smoke to allow a helicopter to land during Vietnam War operation.

with a mission, with the backing of the nation, with the backing of our political leaders and our families," Whittaker said. "That waned with time when we got into the quagmire. As the war dragged on — and this one very easily could — some of the political leadership started second guessing the national command authority. A lot of the public started second guessing why we were there," Whittaker said.

He personally believes the media is to blame for many of those rifts.

"I'm not a fan of the media. Of course this country is founded on the principle of freedom of freedom of speech, and I bled for that; however, we are starting to get biased media on the side of the anti-war effort, the same as we did back in the '60s.

"What made news was the protest against the war and it seemed like there was more of that than the good things the soldiers were doing. It's the good things

that we're missing today and I sincerely feel this. I don't see it in the paper. All we are reading are the bad things.

"Are we losing a soldier a day in Iraq? Yes, we are," he said. "It's terrible that it's happening. It's a heck of a price to pay." But he wishes the media would focus on the positive impact American actions are having on the people of Iraq. "The American public is not being told about how we are improving their (Iraqis) lives," he said. "They have more personnel freedom now than they have ever had. Our medical units are not only treating Americans, they are also treating Iraqis. The 808th Pipeline Company (of the 90th RRC) laid over 200 miles of pipeline for water and fuel to relieve the shortages in southern Iraq. You don't see that in the media. You don't see that on TV.

"The American people aren't dumb, but if all you hear is the negative side, that's what you are going to believe," he

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Home sweet home

489th Soldiers return to Arkansas, families

Sgt. Greg Yazzie
4003rd GSU Public Affairs

Tears of joy stream down the faces of family and friends and the sound of the pop song "R.O.C.K in the USA" played over the loud speaker in a standing room only crowd at Stalker Gym, Soldiers from the 489th Engineer Battalion's Companies A and C recently returned home to a Fort Hood, Texas, Hero's Welcome Home celebration.

Both companies were deployed into the theatre of operation for one year in April. Before the deployment, they were brought to Fort Hood, where they in processed and retrained before heading overseas. Once they arrived, the mission changed, but both companies were able to embrace the new change and technology with effective measures.

"When we got there we had different missions," Capt. Kirk M. Claunch, C Company commander, said. "At first, we were assigned to the 130th Engineers and helped RSOI (Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration)."

"From there it developed into receiving and implement this new mine detecting equipment," Claunch said.

The new equipment was called the Buffalo and Meerkat, a South African-designed vehicle, which allowed them to reverse the threat and detection of IEDs (improvised explosive device) that could cause great harm to the US led- Coalition forces.

"We learned how to use the new equipment and used proven tactics while developing new tactics and procedures," Claunch said. "Most of our time was spent trying to find them in the 4th Infantry Division sector. We tore down bushes, shrubs and smoothed the shoulders of the road to take away any means or areas the enemy had to hide those IEDs.

"The transition was smooth and we were pretty flexible. A lot of what we did was use mechanized infantry tactics and it all seemed to work," he said.

On the other hand, Company A's main mission was to support the 4th Infantry Division's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment on mobility. That changed once they arrived in Kuwait. Alpha quickly adapted to new two missions.

"Our main mission was to escort EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) teams on IED responses inside the Sunni Triangle and our supporting mission was with the 82nd Airborne Division," 1st Lt. Justin S. Kilpatrick, Company A commander, said.

"Also, we helped train the Ministry of the Interior to guard the dams, irrigation canals and confiscate enemy ammunition while in the theatre of operation," Kilpatrick said.

After rolling with the changes and making the mission a success, the time spent in the theatre of operation came to an end and they returned home.

"It feels good to be home," Spc. Jess Rollins, Company C, said. "I did not expect this. I thought they were just going to let us go."



Photo by Capt. Lora Neal

A large crowd welcomes soldiers of A and C companies, 489th Engineer Battalion, back to Arkansas in April during ceremonies in Hot Springs.

"We felt that our mission was a big success and we feel that we contributed a lot to the overall effort. We tried something new and adapted to the conditions over there in Iraq. We drew up all the skills as Engineers and provided a real good example for Engineers such as the flexibility and adaptability that we can have in theatre to take new equipment and a mission to make it successful. I am very happy to be back home and I think everyone else is too," concluded Claunch.

Tree 'graveyard' represents years of service

**By Spc. Douglas Ray
and Pfc. Cameron McCown
343rd MPAD**

Towering over the sidewalk outside the U.S. Army Reserve Center on Camp Pike in North Little Rock, Ark., is a massive mixture of wood, leaves and sap that has come to be one of the most respected and revered trees known to the Soldiers here. What makes this tree so extraordinary is that high in the reaches of this old plant hang about 30 pairs of boots — combat boots — all with white writing on the soles.

"It's a tradition that was started in 1996," said Col. Glen H. Eddins, former commander of the 460th Chemical Brigade of the 90th Regional Readiness Command, Camp Pike. Eddins was the deputy commander of the brigade when the tradition began.

"A bunch of the noncommissioned officers from the 460th actually began the tradition," continued Eddins.

Master Sgt. Robert Rolf, Master Sgt. Ervin Batey, Master Sgt. Richard Jung, Sgt. Maj. Maurice Allgeier and Sgt. 1st Class Mack Bond created a club they called "Larry's Place," named after the first retiree, Bruce Larry Divore, Eddins said.

"'Larry's Place' was a bond between us senior NCOs that grew until we all finally left the 460th," Rolf said. "When a Soldier retires, he writes his entry date into the Army on the bottom of one boot, his retirement date on the sole of the other boot, ties the two boots together and throws them up in the tree."

Eddins provided some history, or folklore, about the club.

"Robert Rolf made up this bumbling, fictitious supply sergeant named Houck that never showed up to drill and constantly made mistakes," he said.

"Sgt. Houck really came up with the idea," Rolf said with a laugh. "I just came up with the idea of throwing our boots in the old tree to carry on our bond and extend it to others."

Soldiers retiring from the 90th RRC are welcome to hoist a pair of boots into the tree as a final military action. Eddins said, "It's really sort of a last step a soldier makes. He'll not be needing those boots anymore."

Eddins, who retired May 1, said he plans to throw a pair of boots in the tree, too. He added, "I'll be happy for my boots to join all those who have preceded me in making their mark in history."



Photo by Spc. Brian Raley

Retired Master Sgt. Jerry Schultz, 460th Chemical Brigade logistics management specialist, tosses pair of boots into the 'boot tree' near the Reserve building at Camp Pike.

90th Public Affairs staff nets journalism awards

The U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) recently announced its winners in all categories of the Army Reserve 2003 Keith L. Ware Journalism Award competition. The 90th Regional Readiness Command's Public Affairs Office was selected the best in the Television Information Program and News Articles categories.

Capt. Jeff Weir acted as producer and

director in the production of the Television Information Program titled "The Price of Freedom: The Tough 'Ombre Story.'" It is a history of the 90th Division from its beginning in World War I until the completion of the video in 2003.

Previous stories of the 90th Division through World War I, World War II into deactivation to its reactivation as an Army Reserve Command had proven to be total-

ly incorrect historically or were partially correct.

"I worked very hard to get all the facts historically correct and double checked to make sure they were. I used reference books, the National Archives and the memories of old veterans to establish the facts and, in a number of cases, cancel the facts

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90th DCS workers USARC's best

By Capt. Lora Neal
Public Affairs Staff Officer

Two members of the 90th Regional Readiness Command's office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for logistics were recently named as the 'Best of the Best' by the U.S. Army Reserve Command.

Sgt. 1st Class Arlando Bass was named as Transportation Corps Regiment Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Pamela Johnston was selected as the Transportation Corps Regiment Civilian of the Year. Bass also won the Department of the Army level award.

The Chief of Army Reserve nominated both Bass and Johnston for USARC's top transportation award. Maj. Charles Bryant, 90th acting chief of transportation and services, in his nominating letter, said of Bass, "...his keen approach to mission accomplishment gives Sgt. 1st Class Bass exceptional ability to quickly prioritize and analyze tasks to meet all mission requirements every time. This Soldier is destined to soar above his peers and should be rewarded for his tremendous transportation support during Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Bryant gave equally high praise of Johnston stating.

"She is a do-er. She takes something, grabs it, runs with it, and accomplishes things faster than I can. She is a make-it-happen person. She works a lot of weekends and late hours with mob-ing or demob-ing. She often makes requests contracts for hotels, etc., on the spur of the moment."

Bryant noted with pride the 90th is the first RRC to win two awards in a single year. He encouraged both workers to enter the competition.

"Maj. Bryant prompted me to submit a packet and told me I do so much," Bass said, "but I told him, 'I'm just doing my job.'"

Bass credits his work ethic, discipline and self-motivation from eight years in Field Artillery, saying the rough times in combat arms really helped shape him into the NCO he is today.

The Transportation Corps Regiment formally recognized the Transportation Corps Regimental Officer, Noncommissioned Officer and Civilian of the Year in 1989. The award was designed to recognize a deserving



Photo by Capt. Lora Neal

Sgt. 1st Class Arlando Bass, 90th Regional Readiness Command Staff Movement Noncommissioned Officer, and Pamela Johnston, 90th RRC Traffic Management Specialist, confer on a project.

individual from each category for the calendar year. In 1998, the program was expanded to select a Reserve Component Transportation Corps Regimental Officer and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. The program was further expanded to select an Active and Reserve Component Warrant Officer of the Year in 1999.

Both Bass and Johnston said what they like most about their jobs is the variety and growth opportunities offered by their positions. A typical day for Bass and Johnston is anything but typical.

"Every day can be a challenge. It's a job where you react to situations. You don't have a set schedule today," Johnston said.

Bass agreed.

"My days are never the same because

I have so many titles under the 88N military occupational specialty frame," he said. "One day I may work with busses, the next day may be hazmat (hazardous material) and the next day someone may want to know how to ship weapons on a plane. It's fast paced. I'll say that. It can be challenging."

Johnston especially noted the good work environment in the G-4 transportation shop. "We have a good team up there. Everybody is enjoyable to work with. Everyone puts in a full effort."

Johnston said she feels a sense of accomplishment in her job.

"Last year I took care of thousands of Soldiers mob-ing and de-mob-ing. It's only a small part (of their mobilizing and demobilizing process), but we took care of them when we could. This past year I've done lodging and food contracting for all pre-mobilizing and demobilizing Soldiers."

Bass is the test control officer as well as the hazmat certifier for the 90th. He trains and tests for all European drivers' licenses. Any equipment which units may be sending that is classified as hazardous or sensitive has to have a hazmat certifier check it against the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for safe shipping. For example, 5,000 gallon fuel tankers must be checked to verify that they have been purged.

Bass has been working as a Staff Movement NCO since 1999 and Johnston has held her position for more than two years. Both are assigned many other responsibilities in addition to their primary jobs.

Both winners have many similarities: they attend every school available that applies to their jobs; they enjoy their work; they strive to excel, and they are dedicated.

Bass offers advice to others interested in getting into the transportation area.

"Keep a positive attitude. Some days will be very challenging. I went to all the schools I could and that helped me a lot. My personality has always been to have a positive outlook. I enjoy what I do and the military as a whole. That's why I do what I do. I enjoy it."

Bass will travel to Fort Eustis, Va., in July to receive the DA level award.

He said, she said

Now what?

PREP helps married Soldiers get reacquainted after MOB

By Capt. Lora Neal
90th RRC Public Affairs

Twenty couples recently gathered to participate in the new Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program, or PREP, in Dallas, Texas. The workshop is offered to recently demobilized 90th Regional Readiness Command Soldiers and their spouses in an effort to teach them positive communication skills.

Seminar instructor Chaplain (Col.) Ed Simpson, 90th

RRC staff chaplain, said the workshop's purpose was to try to prevent divorce and enhance relationships. The workshop was developed to teach couples the skills and attitudes associated with good relationships.

The Army chose to offer this curriculum because the training was developed in a university setting.

"I like this course because it's very practical," Simpson said. "Participants in the program have helped produce what we teach. The University of Denver has been doing

this research for approximately 30 years and has solid roots that scientifically support the findings."

Simpson said PREP has a dual purpose; it is offered as a means of helping Soldiers keep their marriages strong, to keep Soldiers in the military. "We don't want deployments and other military responsibilities to keep you from having a good marriage. So we offer this training, at no cost to the Soldier, which is valued at well over \$500 for the weekend."

Simpson explained that the 90th Commanding General, Maj. Gen. James Sholar, approved the training and ensures funding is available.

"We want our military families to stay together. This is a way for the military, the Army, to

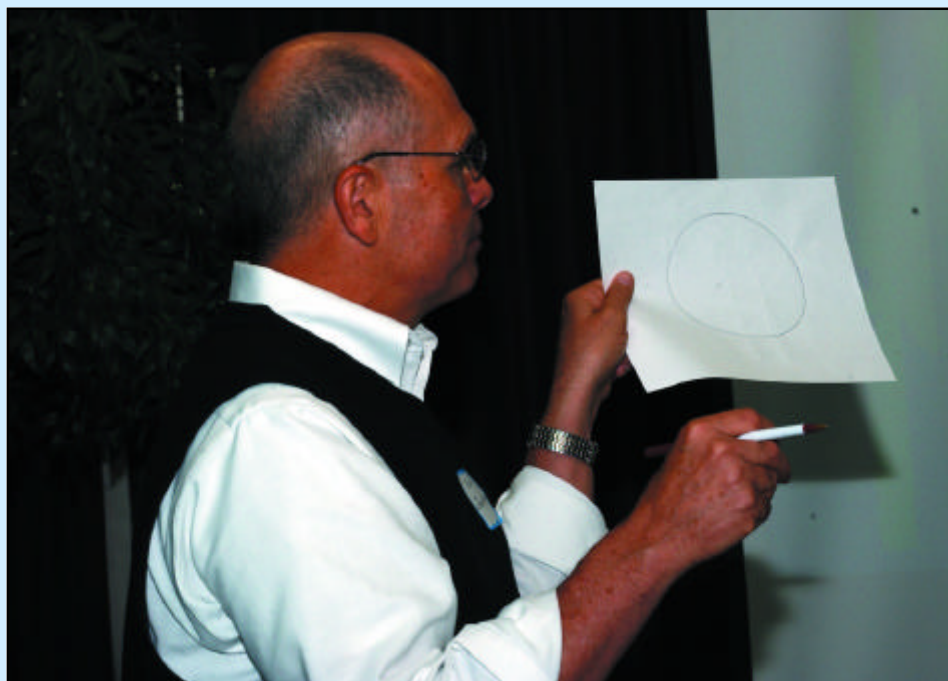


Photo by Capt. Lora Neal

Chaplain (Col.) Ed Simpson, 90th RRC Chaplain, demonstrates to PREP attendees the stages of thinking people go through during life.



Command S...
the PREP clas...



Photo by Capt. Lora Neal

gt. Major Gary McElligott and his wife, Lt. Col. JoAnne McElligott, 90th RRC administrative nurse, get reacquainted at s in Dallas following his return from Iraq.

Marriage enrichment: a personal story

**By Spc. Brian Raley
90th RRC Public Affairs**

My wife and I recently participated in the 90th Regional Readiness Command's Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program called PREP in Dallas, Texas.

Today's United States Army is said to best be the best Army ever. It is better trained, better equipped, and better suited to handle more than just combat.

The Army's main obligation to its soldiers used to be simple — three warm meals a day, medical care and a paycheck.

However, over the years not only has the Army become a more compassionate Army, but it has realized how a happy, supported soldier is much more effective.

Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in the early '90s were great successes for the Army. Casualties were very low and the operations were very speedy. Though successful on the battlefield, it showed to have some negative effects on Soldier's home lives, mainly concerning their relationships with their spouse.

Chaplain (Col.) Ed Simpson, 90th Regional Readiness Command chaplain, hosted a marriage enrichment seminar entitled PREP to help ease the transition from being mobilized to home life.

My wife and I had been looking forward to attending. We are young and vigorous and like most young people our lives are very busy. We have a two-year-old son, Landon,

and Amy is a full-time nursing student who also works nights full time as well at Children's Hospital in Little Rock, Ark. I am currently mobilized with the Public Affairs Office in the 90th Regional Readiness Command headquarters. The weekend away from child and everything else was certainly needed and anticipated.

Chaplain Simpson greeted all couples the first morning, and then began the seminar. Attendees were not sure what to expect; they just came with the anticipation of hearing something that could help a marriage. The chaplain began by introducing points that are known to be "marriage killers" and how they

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TOUGH 'OMBRE SPORTS

An Up-'lifting' experience

**Story and Photos by
Pfc. Jeremy D. Crisp, 345th MPAD
Contributions and Photos by
Lt. Col. Jon (David) Mullins**

"If you're so strong, how come you can't take out the garbage?" Well Mom, you needn't tell that to the Fort Sam Houston "Strike Force" Powerlifting Team. It literally "cleaned up" at the USA Powerlifting Military Nationals at the Killeen, Texas, Civic Center recently.

A team of the armed forces, consisting of 90th Regional Readiness Command, active component and retired military personnel, collected 11 medals, with each member placing, including a third place team trophy.

Three Army Reserve Soldiers of the Strike Force team are also members of the 90th RRC. They are Lt. Col. Jon David Mullins and Master Sgt. Martin C. Hilliard, 90th Readiness Team, and Sgt. Tony Fantasia of the 90th's 228th Combat Support Hospital. These soldiers took home three medals collectively, with first, second and third place finishes.

'Big Tony' (Fantasia), the youngest member and jokester of the group, relates their success to the group workouts four times a week.

"I've been working out with the team for two months now and have seen lots of improvement. I've gone from 285 pounds in the bench to 330, and from 350 in the squat to 500," he said. Fantasia said he just "loves to do it," and ultimately wants to be in the World's Strongest Man competition.

The meet consists of each team member competing in three different events — the



Photo courtesy 345th MPAD

Soldiers from the 90th RRC who participated in the USA Powerlifting Military Nationals recently are, from left: Sgt. Tony Fantasia, Lt Col. Jon David Mullins, and MSgt. Martin C. Hilliard.

squat, bench press and deadlift. Each competitor gets three tries at each weight discipline, with pre-determined weight for each attempt established before the meet by the competitor. Not only do the lifters have to worry about lifting the weight they themselves have picked, they also have to do it properly.

Three judges surround the lifter in a literal firing squad, with a mechanical buzzer aimed at the lifter's technique. Failing to complete a lift in proper form can trigger the judges to push a red button that could mean the life and death of the lift. If two out of three judges hit the red button, then the competitor gets a "no go" for that turn.

When the lifters prepare to perform their task, they don't go alone. Teammates and fellow competitors alike shout their

words of encouragement. One could expect to hear "get what you want," "stay in there," and "head up, stand up," along with personal whooping, hollering and grunting as the men buckle down to take care of business.

Like actors in plays, these steadfast competitors are literally on a stage. Lifters step up onto a rough cut, sweat laden piece of carpet, grab an iron bar to lift what seems like tons of metal, all in front of cameras, judges, an audience and spotters.

That's no problem for the resilient 'Strike Force' members, though. Team leader Mullins said lifters tune out their surroundings.

"People just blur into obscurity, they just fade out," he said. "Heck, some guys don't even see the front judge, and he's just five feet away."

TOUGH 'OMBRE PROFILE

Blazing Battles

90th retention Soldier fights fires part-time

By Spc. Brian Raley
90th RRC Public Affairs

A 90th Regional Readiness Command Soldier and four teammates recently competed in a Firefighter Combat Challenge in Conway, Ark., at the city's annual Toad Suck Daze Festival.

Sgt. 1st Class Brett A. Lantz, the assistant operations non-commissioned officer for the Retention Transition Office, competed in his role as a volunteer firefighter, which he had become in response to an advertisement from the Gravel Ridge, Ark., Volunteer Fire Department.

"The fire department had a sign out front that said, 'Firefighters Needed.' I drove by it every day for a year going to and from work. I kept saying to myself, 'how could you need firefighters?'" Lantz said. "It finally hit me. I figured that if I can't be on the front lines fighting as a Soldier, I can do something for my community here. I called that day and asked them what I could do."

Lantz is the department morale officer, which compliments his military retention job. Immediately he tackled the mission of raising morale among the ranks in the department and was brainstorming for ideas on how to keep his fellow firefighters motivated.

The Firefighter Combat Challenge was introduced during a weekly training meeting. The Gravel Ridge fire department had competed in the challenge once several years ago, but had never tried again. Lantz heard of the contest and decided he would mention participating again and make it an annual event. The department welcomed the opportunity to participate. With just a few weeks until the event, he organized a team and entered it in the competition.

Lantz's team was the only volunteer department to compete and he takes pride in that.

"I think it said a lot about our department in the fact that we



Photo by Spc. Brian Raley

Sgt. 1st Class Brett Lantz prepares for firefighter competition during Toad Suck Days.

were the only volunteer fire department team participating," he said. "There were teams that traveled several states to compete here today. Their job year round is to simply train for this challenge and do their best to make it to the world championship. Our team doesn't get paid at all. We just thought it would be a lot of fun and we like the idea of it all."

Without pay or training time permitted during the workday, Lantz and his team prepared for competition, which included

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4013th 'runs' Polk

By Spc. Brian Raley
90th RRC Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 4013th Garrison Support Unit of Bossier City, La., have been mobilized to work along side active duty Army and civilian personnel at Fort Polk, La. Their mission is to assist Reserve Component Soldiers and units with the mobilization and demobilization process. Successful completion of this mission has earned credit for the unit Army-wide.

The 4013th, under the direction currently of Lt. Col. Andrew Fairchild, Mobilization Support Battalion Commander, has been responsible for thousands of troops through deployment support since the beginning of its mobilization. At one point, it was managing over 6,000 Soldiers and only 700 of those were in garrison support of their mission.

The workload was always increasing, but unit members exceeded the mission and received recognition Army-wide. They were awarded runner-up for the Chief of Staff of the Army Deployment Excellence Award, Supporting Unit Category Competition.

The 4013th, at Fort Polk since January 2003, was mobilized to perform several missions concerning deploying troops. When an Army Reserve or National Guard unit arrives at Fort Polk, whether deploying or returning, the 4013th automatically assumes command and control.

It is the 4013th's responsibility to provide them support in all areas, including, but not limited to: life support (meals, billeting, transportation), training, mobilization and demobilization briefings, paperwork, equipment storing, testing, inventory and

transportation to and from their home states. The unit also provides support to Freedom Flights and management of personnel assigned to the Holding Company (B Company).

Col. Bud Jameson, commander of the 4013th, said that his unit had no idea what they were about to face and accomplish during this deployment, but he feels his Soldiers performed beyond expectation.

"My people thought they were going to be here augmenting directorates. I think 4013th Soldiers came down here with an idea of maybe 20 percent of what they were actually going to do.

"Command a brigade. It sounds real easy, but you have to learn the active duty stuff a Reserve Soldier doesn't do. It's like scratching frost off of a window and looking through, but I had real good folks who were willing to work harder because they didn't know how to do it the first time. I can't speak highly enough of that level of dedication. They've done a great job, they really have," Jameson said.

"And that's the net result of the 4013th's mobilization to Fort Polk," said Jameson: "teamwork."

"Being a finalist in the DEA has proven that the 4013th GSU is critical to Fort Polk. At this point in time, I would take my staff and match them up against any other GSU at a minimum. In fact, I think we could do as well as most other active-duty brigades," Jameson said.

"By the same token, we couldn't have done what we did without the good people here. We make a great team," he concluded.

90th eyes Desert Warrior exercise

Col. Bud Jameson
4013th GSU

Entering the second year of supporting the Global War on Terrorism, things were already jumping at the 90th Regional Readiness Command headquarters in North Little Rock, Ark. But the ramp-up for USARC Exercise Desert Warrior '05 at Fort Bliss, Texas, in June, 2005, has accelerated the pace even more. Of course, being the lead element of change is always challenging and demanding. And that is what the Tough 'Ombres of the 90th RRC are deeply involved in right now.

"Train as We Fight" has long been a platitude across the Army and its components, but the Army Reserve is now taking it to heart at the United States Army Reserve Command level with the institution of the USARC "Warrior Exercises." Under this concept, USARC will transition from the current 30-plus exercises to only five "dirt"

exercises. These will be the vehicles to execute the Chief of Army Reserve's (CAR) two directives for annual training – replicate as closely as possible the mobilization experience for the participating units and have them leave annual training as deployable as possible short of actually being called to active duty. Accordingly, the Warrior Exercises will greatly enhance the directed shift from the "Alert – Mobilize – Train – Deploy" to a more relevant "Train – Alert – Deploy" model.

How to do that while the nation and the Army Reserve are at war is the challenge facing the 90th RRC. However, it does have one advantage. This is not the command's first experience at this sort of exercise. Being in close proximity to the 460th Chemical Brigade, the 90th has both gained ex-460th personnel, and learned from years of supporting the brigade at Exercise Rio Bravo. This exercise initially started as one

of three chemical exercises across the Army Reserve. But, it grew into a multi-compo, multi-functional exercise in 2001. By 2003, it had grown beyond the ability of the 460th to both control and participate in, so the 90th RRC had taken it over and would have been the first RRC to run a major exercise if it had not been cancelled in the wake of the Global War on Terrorism.

Now the 90th is back at it, but with renewed vigor and added emphasis from USARC. Exercise Desert Warrior '05 is to be the proof of concept for shifting the entire USARC to the Warrior Exercises beginning in 2006.

So what is a Warrior Exercise? To begin with, whenever possible it will involve an Army National Guard or Active Duty maneuver force. In support of this brigade will be the full spectrum of Army Reserve combat support and combat service support capabilities.

TOUGH 'OMBRE BRIEFS

POV safety tips help Soldiers avoid the dangers of the road

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) — Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians can now go online to offer Army suggestions — and possibly win some cash.

The Army Suggestion Program, <https://armysuggestions.army.mil>, went online May 17. Logging on requires an Army Knowledge Online user name and password.

While there are several advantages to an Army central online program, the biggest plus is anyone with access to the Web can make a suggestion in a timely manner — no matter where they are, said Brenda Scott, a Suggestion Program official with the Office of the Chief of Staff Strategic Management and Innovations Division.

In the past, deployed Soldiers who came up with good ideas when away from home station would often wait to submit that idea through channels until they returned home, Scott said. The reasons for the wait, she said, were several: getting a copy of Army Regulation 5-17 that outlines submission requirements, keeping the hardcopy submission form clean in the field while filling it out and lack of research resources.

The site also has a link to AR 5-17.

There is even a save function that allows suggestors to fill out the submission packet over a period of time rather than during just one session.

The program seeks suggestions that improve work methods, materials, processes, equipment, logistics, utilities or tools that will benefit the Army. Implemented suggestions that save the Army money are often eligible for a cash award. The more money saved, the larger the potential award.

The suggestion must present a problem or situation, propose a solution and state the benefit to the government.

The new Website also allows supervisors to nominate a suggestor for recognition as the top suggestor of the year in Soldier and DA civilian categories during the annual Secretary of the Army Awards ceremony.



Photo by Warren Byrd

Food Fanatics

Staff Sgt. Joko Riyanto (middle) and Sgt. Warren Hathoway (right) of the 223rd Maintenance Company, 90th Regional Readiness Command, hold trophy the unit received for winning the Department of the Army Phillip A. Connelly Award for Excellence in Food Service Competition. Maj. Gen. James R. Sholar, 90th commanding general, stands with the two Soldiers at the cere-

Pouches developed that will change way troops drink in field

NATICK, Mass. (Army News Service) — Pouches that can be resealed may soon change the way troops drink in the field.

Drink pouches developed at the U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass., in partnership with packaging companies, allow warfighters to pour water into a package holding a powder mix, shake and consume the beverage from the opening.

If they want to save some for a little later, the plastic zipper seal holds it in. Often they didn't bother preparing a beverage in a separate container. Field data showed that about half of the Soldiers are not consuming the Meal, Ready-to-Eat or

MRE beverage base mix because of the inconvenience of using and cleaning the canteen cup, said Lauren Milch, a physical scientist at Combat Feeding who managed package development.

Pouring the mix into a canteen full of water is prohibited according to Army doctrine, so the packages are frequently thrown away unopened.

The 12-ounce beverage pouch is the first project of the Individual Combat Ration Team's Improved Packaging for Combat Rations program aimed at reducing packaging and increasing consumption, said Vicki Loveridge, a senior food technologist and project officer for improved packaging.

She said including a resealable plastic bag was a partial solution, but the drink pouch takes care of everything by replacing the current dry mix package with a disposable drinking vessel.

Family Matters

By Linda Sholar
Family Program Advisory Council

As I write this article, I know we have Soldiers who have served our country nobly and are anxious to return home to their loved ones: spouses, children, parents, relatives and friends.

They and their families have made great sacrifices...they have put their personal lives on hold to fight a war on foreign soil.

Soldiers have literally risked their lives on a daily basis and family members have learned to make it without mom, dad, husband, wife, son, daughter for 12 to 18 months. Some Soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice while our nation has watched and mourned each lost life.

I have shared in some of the reunions... the great celebrations... and felt honored and humbled to be in the presence of modern day heroes. These Soldiers and families have paid their dues and now they want to get on with their lives. They are uncomfortable when we call them heroes.

I have also met with families of Soldiers who were extended on the eve of returning home. This is especially hard on Soldiers and families...but I am impressed with their resolve to do what they have committed to do and to make the best of it. I am so proud of all our Soldiers and their families.

As Soldiers return, other Soldiers take their places. Whether the Soldier is returning or leaving, many questions and issues arise unique to them, questions that need one-on-one responses. I have learned of a great resource that serves Active Army, Active National Guard, and Army Reserves and their families. It is called Army One Source and is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Army One Source (AOS) was implemented in August 15, 2003. The Office of the Secretary of Defense has funded AOS through 2008. It is accessible by phone, on line, or face-to-face visits.

Since its implementation, they have received 5,015 calls, 6,231 on line visits, and 850 referrals for counseling. It is staffed by highly qualified consultants and there is no cost to Soldiers or their families. It can be used anonymously and is confidential.

I have heard only good things about AOS and its services. So if you have a question and don't know who to ask or you don't want to ask someone you know, access Army One Source:

By phone in the US 1-800-464-8107

Online @ www.armyone-source.com

User ID: Army password:one-source



Other support systems designed to provide assistance for deployment and reunion include: Family Life Chaplains (available in every unit) Army Community Services, Family Support Centers, Family Program Coordinators and Directors

If you have questions on how to access these services contact your local unit or your Family Program Advisory Council representative. The members of the council and the Family Program Director are listed below. **We are here for you.**

Family Program Advisory Council

90th RRC Family Support Director – Franklin Joiner (501) 771-7838

172nd Corps Readiness Group – **Sam Bennett**

90th Regional Readiness Group – **Carol Dorough, Pat Moore**

647th ASG -

420th Engineer Brigade – **Michele Garcia**

377th Theatre Support Command – **Nancy Long**

460th Chemical Brigade – **Suzi McNeely**

HHC, 90th Regional Readiness Command – **Deborah Westmoreland**

807th Medical Brigade – **Shirley Taylor, Dipak Patel**

95th Division – **Stephanie Spybuck**

348th Personnel Group – **Gloria Matthias**

OCAR Liaison – **Jean Sexton**

Council Chair – **Orville Warren**

Adviser – **Linda Sholar, Martha Kirkpatrick**

90th RRC Commander – **MG Ron Sholar**

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several events performed as a relay. Each was physically demanding. The events include a stair climb, water hose hoist, sledgehammer, obstacle course and the dummy pull, which Lantz performed. The dummy is a 185-pound simulated clothed person. The contestant must pull the dummy a specified distance to end the relay.

Lantz's team did not place high enough to advance into the next round of competition, but he says next year his team will have more time to train and get ready.

"We only had a couple of weeks to throw this thing together, but we still wanted to do it. We enjoy the competition and there is more to it than winning. Just showing up to compete as a volunteer depart-

ment really says something about the character of the people I work with there," Lantz said.

"Preparing for this competition provided a great opportunity to increase camaraderie. Plus, I think we earned a lot of respect from the full time departments that were there competing with us," concluded Lantz.

GSU ensures smooth transition for demobilizing OIF, OEF units

By Spc. Mark Albright
4003rd GSU Public Affairs

When Soldiers demobilize at Fort Hood, Texas, who greets them and helps them get home?

Another Soldier.

The 4003rd Garrison Support Unit is usually the first to meet returning Soldiers when they arrive on the "Freedom Flights" from overseas. The demobilizing Soldiers heavily outweigh the number of 4003rd unit members who often must stay awake 20 hours or more to get all of the redeploying troops in-processed and help them get back to their home stations.

The 4003rd, from Norman, Okla., is at Fort Hood and was mobilized Jan. 17, 2003, in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Their main mission has been to inprocess Soldiers returning from active duty. Along the way, 4003rd personnel get to know their fellow Soldiers, and consequently get details about their overseas experiences.

The troops land at Robert Gray Army Air Field on West Fort Hood and are manifested as soon as they are on the ground. The 4003rd then busses them to a welcome ceremony at either Abrams Physical Fitness Center or Keischnick Physical Fitness Center.

"The 4003rd is responsible to make sure that all of the training is done for the returning Soldiers," said Master Sgt. Daniel Hagen, 4003rd operations supervisor. "Also, the unit handles all equipment requirements, personnel requirements and the entire schedule of the returning units once they are on Fort Hood.

"It's really great to see all of the families," he said. "It's crazy. There are family members everywhere screaming for their loved ones, it's really terrific," said Hagen.

Several of those returning from Iraq shared some of their feelings about being deployed.

"We were on constant alert and constantly aware of our surroundings over there. We did a number of raids and flash check points," said Pfc. Kenneth Doyle, an infantryman with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division, returning from Iraq.

"It feels really good to be close to home," said Spc. Brian Brown, Company A, 5th Engineer Battalion. "The people helping us are great; they seem eager to help us get home."

Spc. Raphael Otero, a mechanic in Company C, 204th Forward Support Battalion of the 4th Infantry Division, said, "It's been a long time." Otero was in Iraq for eight months. He appreciates the 4003rd's support and assistance.

"The people helping us are outstanding," Otero continued. "They are getting everybody through and making sure everybody has what they need."

The 4003rd also helps Soldiers who need to get to other installations.

"We gather the Soldiers' information and then contact the Information Transportation Office and process their paperwork so they get tickets to elsewhere," said Sgt. Karina Gonzalez, training NCO for the 4003rd. "We try to have a 24-hour turnaround."

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from printed or video stories previously told," said Weir.

"Henri LeVaufre from Periers, France, and his voluminous collection of WWII veterans' statements, fact books and situation maps were used to a large degree to validate facts for that part of the program."

Weir visited a large number of states, shooting interviews with veterans and visiting museums which contained information on the 90th Division from World War I into its Army Reserve status following World War II.

Hours of research went into reviewing books, photographs and old video clips in the National Archives. He also tracked the movement of the 90th from D-Day, June 6, 1944, at Utah Beach in Normandy, France on through France, Belgium and ending in Germany.

"The visits with the WWII veterans were the most enjoyable part of the production. Seeing and hearing the pride they still take in the 90th Division impressed the importance of accuracy to me. I am sure it is accurate and a film in which they can have pride," concluded Weir.

Bob Williams was the correspondent who wrote the winner of the USARC's News Article category which related the story of the death and funeral of Pfc. Jonathan Cheatham of Company A, 489th Engineer Battalion from Hot Springs, Ark.

Cheatham has been the only casualty of the more than 9,000 Soldiers mobilized in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedoms from the 90th.

"Dr. Barbara Porchia, the mother of Pfc. Cheatham, spoke at her son's funeral and told of what he had told her in person and e-mail after arriving in Iraq," said

Williams. "The strength she showed in presenting the eulogy at her only son's funeral was astounding to me. I have a son that I dearly love and could never deliver the eulogy at his funeral. I don't have her inner strength."

Williams said the emotional feelings he had felt at the funeral made the article difficult to write. "It's very hard to write about death and funerals, but, because of the doctor's eulogy, it was even more difficult for me."

"I was told by some that the article touched them and I told them, 'If you think you were touched, imagine trying to write the article and retain your composure,'" he said. "I just tried to tell what I saw, heard, and especially how I felt."

Weir and Williams' work and the resultant awards are the first major awards for the 90th since 2000.

Escorts,” Yates was given the opportunity to change roles a few times and tackle another mission. He served on the volunteer fire department at Camp Commando. Though it may seem like a menial task, it gave him a change of pace and something to look forward to. “I served with the volunteer fire department at Camp Commando. I really loved that job. I even got a certificate of appreciation from the 1st MEF commander,” he said.

Soldiers of the 468th were deployed to Iraq for more than a year and performed several missions. Staff Sgt. Lashauna D. Gulley said that the many types of jobs often put a damper on morale. “The hardest thing, of course, was being away from my family,” she said.

Young said the heat and the duration

of the deployment caused the biggest dips in morale, but there were things that boosted it, as well.

“The lowest point of the deployment was the uncertainty of when we were coming home,” Young said. “It changed several times. Every time we thought we were about to pack up and head home something would change. All of the sudden we had been there a year because of the rapidly changing situation over there.

“Another thing was the heat,” Young continued. “The heat was terrible on morale. In Kuwait we had 130-degree heat and no air conditioning. Once we arrived at Camp Cedar, Iraq, and saw how much better the facilities were compared to Kuwait, morale climbed back up. In Iraq we had air conditioning and permanent latrines, and

that was a huge boost to our morale.”

Though things seemed tough for the 468th, it ended up being a successful operation. They were in theater for over a year and performed many missions that they were not trained to handle. They accomplished every mission and returned home with every unit member.

“I think we did an excellent job,” Young said. “We overcame and adapted to many situations and learned a lot. The things we thought we could not do, we did.”

The 468th Soldiers, as a whole, said that they proved to be an example of how units must operate in today’s changing and flexible Army. Every Soldier is a Soldier first and may be asked to perform missions outside of their training.

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said. “Therefore, it’s going to build resentment. It’s going to build a resistance to the war effort and that’s not taking care of Soldiers. When was the last time any media report told about the number of schools that are opening again or the amount of water or electricity that’s being restored?”

Whittaker also feels that our political leaders need to look beyond their partisan differences to work toward a common good.

“There’s a wedge being built between the civilian leadership of our nation and our military. That wedge is being imposed by the expressed public differences of some of our political leaders.

“I think it is very important that our nation’s leadership sets down the mantle of being a Republican or Democrat. Regardless of the party affiliation of the President of the United States, that position is the President of all Americans.”

Whittaker feels we need unity of purpose.

“We have got to pull together as a nation; not only in the citizenry, but, also our political leaders,” he said. “We have got to support our president, who is supporting our soldiers. I am a firm supporter of President Bush and I would be a firm supporter if it were Al Gore.”

He also sees a need for a clearly defined goal to be presented to the American people.

“I think we need to establish a pur-

“We have got to pull together as a nation; not only in the citizenry, but, also our political leaders. We have got to support our president, who is supporting our soldiers. I am a firm supporter of President Bush and I would be a firm supporter if it were Al Gore.”

—Marvin Whittaker

pose, a strategy and a plan to meet those objectives. We have to rebuild Iraq and give it back to the Iraqi people. We have to have a plan to do that.”

For the spouses and families he said, “Have faith in your soldiers. Have faith in what they stand for and what they are about.

“Encourage your elected officials to support the effort. Don’t be bashful to your elected officials; let them know how you feel. Demand that they support your soldiers that are in harms way. Remember, we don’t work for the elected officials, they work for us.”

He added advice to the mobilized soldiers, “Guys and gals coming home,

you’ve got to understand that your spouse probably has a little bit different perspective. That spouse has been working independently of you, having to make the decisions, to budget the resources, to run the households, to take care of these things you used to take care of when you were home; so give that spouse credit for that and accept those changes.”

To the family members at home, he said, “The spouses and the families that are waiting on those guys to come back home, when they do come home, please understand where they’ve been, the environment they lived in, what they’ve seen, and love them, bear with them and hold them.

“All of us, all of us have to stay together and work together and, with this, we will all be successful in the end,” Whittaker said. “I think one of the greatest honors one can have in our profession is being able to lead the American soldier. For the sergeants and young officers, senior officers and senior NCOs out there, our soldiers are not here for our convenience, we’re here for their welfare. And it’s a privilege and an honor for us to lead the American soldier, always take it as such.

“Our nation and our way of life are in jeopardy, but I have no fear that we’re going to lose simply because of the caliber of young men and women that serve. This nation not only can, but should, be awful proud of our young folks that serve in uniform because they are the best in the world,” he emphatically concluded.



90th RRC Soldier of the Year

Spc. Melissa Najera (left) of the 900th Quartermaster Company, El Paso, Texas, recently was selected as the 90th Regional Readiness Command Soldier of the Year. Here, she is pacing others in the 2-mile run. Staff Sgt. Kenneth Sharp of the 304th Chemical Company McAlester, Okla., was selected as the 90th RRC's NCO of the Year. The two advance to the U.S. Army Reserve Command level of competition, which will be held June 21-27.

U.S. Army photo

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invest in the lives of its Soldiers. Hopefully, it will have a good, positive effect on their lives," Simpson said.

He said the most important skill taught in the seminar is the 'speaker/listener technique.' A floor tile is used as a prop to indicate which person 'has the floor,' and which person is the listener. The speaker can speak only for himself and not try to read the mind of his spouse.

The listener paraphrases what the speaker says with the goal being for the couple to talk without fighting and to focus on understanding, not on agreeing.

Sgt. 1st Class Geisha Wallace, personnel noncommissioned officer with the 4013th Garrison Support Unit, Bossier City, La.,

said she liked the speaker/listener technique training best. "As a couple, we have implemented this technique to try and talk some things out. I gained that we can talk things out rationally using the speaker/listening technique."

Simpson said his biggest challenge in offering PREP is in trying to get the message into the hands of returning Soldiers. He asks that commanders encourage their demobilizing soldiers to participate in PREP and also to disseminate information about the program and its availability.

The last PREP for FY04 is 10-12 Sept. in New Orleans, La. For information call Sgt. 1st Class Gail Peavy at 1-800-501-1493 ext. 7372.

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affect a marriage. Though I am not a returning Soldier from a long-term overseas mobilization, I recognized that some of these things were certainly present in our marriage. His points made me realize how some of these problems can arise and escalate through separation caused by mobilizations and deployments.

The goal of the seminar was not only to point out the areas with which your marriage is struggling, but also how to handle problems and concerns through effective communication. The focus of the seminar was learning techniques to help communicate effectively to resolve issues.

The speaker/listener technique was shown and elaborated on as an effective tool to communicate with one's spouse. It presents certain guidelines that each person must follow in order to communicate, not argue. It was shown repeatedly, on videotapes, how much a couple can accomplish through good communication and also how little is accomplished by arguing instead of communicating.

I realized through this course how easy it is to argue as opposed to talking about an issue. Tempers flare and guards are raised and it ends up being a battle of wits, and still the issue normally is not settled. Using the techniques presented in PREP, issues can be resolved and it helps each person better understand the other, and realize why they feel the way they do. Even if the issue is not resolved just yet, both people know their spouse's views on the issue and why. Knowing makes it a lot easier to compromise.

The seminar was very informative and easy to follow and I feel that Amy and I gained a wealth of knowledge. However, we have talked about it and realize that going to the seminar and learning these skills was the easy part. Using the skills in real life is hard. It has to be a joint effort. If both parties are not fully committed to using the skills, it cannot work. The real test is putting it to use and staying committed to it.

My wife and I had a fantastic weekend together and learned how to better our mar-

riage. PREP gave us a great set of tools to use in our marriage and some motivation to use those tools as well. I recommend that any Soldiers returning from mobilization/deployment take this opportunity, no matter how strong your relationship is with your spouse. The skills learned would help you overcome some obstacles that arise during a separation, but culminate upon reunion.

Communication always suffers if someone is away for a long period of time and there are often other issues to handle after rejoining your family. But, if good communication skills are used, it will make it that much easier to settle those issues and continue your marriage and your life.

PREP shows you how to do that. While I am mobilized, I can see how this will help my marriage and my life. The weekend ended beautifully. We took our time returning home to talk a little bit more, but of course the best thing about leaving for a little while is coming home. Landon was thrilled to see us home and we were glad to be home with him.

